IN THE CLAIMS:

1. - 3 (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) An index generation method comprising the steps of: defining, in advance, basic index information concerning an index that constitutes data that describes contents including a set of triggering actions; and generating said index by employing operating procedures that use said basic index information, wherein information relative to a triggering action for the generation of an index and information concerning a timespan for said index are defined for said basic index information wherein said basic index information defines information concerning a hierarchy of at least one higher triggering action related to a lower triggering action such that said lower triggering action comes within said higher triggering action for a single triggering index that is formed for a single lower triggering action, and wherein a higher index covering said higher triggering action is added when the lower index covering said lower triggering action is added.

5. (Previously Presented) An index generation method comprising the steps of: defining, in advance, basic index information concerning an index that constitutes data that describes contents; and generating said index by employing operating procedures that use said basic index information, wherein information relative to a triggering action for the generation of an index and information concerning a timespan for said index are defined for said basic index information wherein said basic index information defines information concerning a composite index that is formed by the effects produced by at least two triggering actions acting together.

6. (Previously Presented) An index generation method that uses at least one triggering action to trigger the index generation of an index which is data concerning contents, comprising the steps of: selecting at least one triggering action from among a set of multiple triggering actions that are defined in advance; determining an index effective time range for said selected triggering action, based on a first timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end, said timespans being defined in advance; generating an index corresponding to said triggering action based on said effective time range; and

calculating a weight value from an algebraic formula containing said first timespan, said second timespan and a weight constant.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Previously Presented) The index generation method according to claim 6, wherein at least two triggering actions act together with a first timespan extending from the occurrence of a first triggering action to said index start, and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of a second triggering action to said index end and for an intermediate period between said first triggering action and said second triggering action, a different constant is defined in advance for each triggering action, and said effective time range is determined based on said defined values of said first timespan, second timespan and intermediate period.

9. - 23 (Canceled)

24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 4, further comprising a step of determining an index effective time range for said lower triggering action, based on a first timespan extending from the occurrence of said lower triggering action to an index start and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of said lower triggering action to an index end, said timespans being defined in advance; and

generating an index corresponding to said triggering action based on said effective time range; and

calculating a weight value from an algebraic formula containing said first timespan, said second timespan and a weight constant.

25. (previously presented) A method according to claim 24, in which said algebraic formula contains a declining exponential containing said first timespan, said exponential being multiplied by said weight constant.

26. (previously presented) A method according to claim 5, further comprising a step of determining an index effective time range for said at least two triggering actions, based on a first timespan extending from the occurrence of a first of said triggering actions to an index start and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of a second triggering action to an index end, said timespans being defined in advance; and

generating an index corresponding to said triggering action based on said effective time range; and

calculating a weight value from an algebraic formula containing said first timespan, said second timespan and a weight constant.

27. (previously presented) The index generation method according to claim 26, wherein at least two triggering actions act together with a first timespan extending from

the occurrence of a first triggering action to said index start, and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of a second triggering action to said index end and for an intermediate period between said first triggering action and said second triggering action, a different constant is defined in advance for each triggering action, and said effective time range is determined based on said defined values of said first timespan, second timespan and interval period.

28. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 4.

29. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 24.

30. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 5.

31. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 26.

32. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 6.

33. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 8.

34. (previously presented) An article of manufacture in computer readable form comprising means for performing a method for operating a computer system having a program , said method comprising the steps of claim 27.

35. (New) The index generation method according to claim 4, wherein said information concerning said timespan, which is defined as said basic index information, is a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start, and a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end.

36. (New) The index generation method according to claim 4, wherein the weight of said index is defined for said basic index information.

37. (New) The index generation method according to claim 4, wherein at least two triggering actions act together with a first timespan extending from the occurrence of a first triggering action to said index start, and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of a second triggering action to said index end and for an intermediate period between said first triggering action and said second triggering action, a different constant is defined in advance for each triggering action, and said effective time range is determined based on said defined values of said first timespan, second timespan and intermediate period.

38. (New) The index generation method according to claim 5, wherein said information concerning said timespan, which is defined as said basic index information, is a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index start, and a timespan extending from the occurrence of a triggering action to an index end.

39. (New) The index generation method according to claim 5, wherein the weight of said index is defined for said basic index information.

40. (New) The index generation method according to claim 5, wherein at least two triggering actions act together with a first timespan extending from the occurrence of a first triggering action to said index start, and a second timespan extending from the occurrence of a second triggering action to said index end and for an intermediate period between said first triggering action and said second triggering action, a different constant is defined in advance for each triggering action, and said effective time range is determined based on said defined values of said first timespan, second timespan and intermediate period.